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4-23-2002

# Media Advisory: "Celebration of Community" Dinner

University of Dayton

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### Recommended Citation

University of Dayton, "Media Advisory: "Celebration of Community" Dinner" (2002). *News Releases*. 10059.  
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April 23, 2002  
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## NEWS RELEASE

### MEDIA ADVISORY

He's a humble man who shies away from the limelight, but the spotlight will find Brother Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., the University of Dayton's popular president, on **Wednesday, April 24**, when more than 700 community leaders turn out for a sold-out tribute dinner on campus.

At the "Celebration of Community" dinner, which starts with a reception at **6 p.m. in the Thomas J. Frericks Convocation Center**, Fitz will be presented with a \$1 million check from J. Bradford Tillson, publisher of the *Dayton Daily News* who spearheaded the fund-raising drive for a portion of a \$5 million endowment for UD's new Center for Leadership in Community. At **7 p.m.**, Vicki Pegg, Montgomery County commissioner, will offer short remarks, and Ron Heifetz, director of Harvard University's Leadership Education Project and author of the widely acclaimed 1994 book *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, will give a keynote address.

Tillson will present the community's \$1 million thank-you check to Fitz, and the center will be officially named the Raymond L. Fitz, S.M., Center for Leadership in Community at a multimedia presentation after the dinner. The presentation is expected to start at approximately **8:40 p.m.** Fitz will lead the audience in "a prayer for justice in our city" that he wrote for the event.

After Fitz steps down on June 30 after a record 23-year stint as president, he will enroll in a six-month spiritual renewal sabbatical program at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley. In January, he will return to the University of Dayton to work in the Fitz Center and teach. Through the center, the greater Dayton community will continue to be an extension of the classroom for students as they learn how to build community and develop a lifelong commitment to leadership and service. Annually, about 300 students already work with 20 professors out in the neighborhoods on real-world concerns ranging from predatory lending to neighborhood redevelopment.

Fitz is the dean of Catholic university presidents. According to the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, no other sitting president has more than 23 years of service. The average tenure for a university president is about seven years, according to the American Council on Education.

His mark at the University of Dayton is indelible. Test scores stand at an all-time high. The endowment now ranks eighth among all Catholic colleges and universities. He's embraced two seemingly different curricular innovations: a humanities-based general education curriculum and an ambitious computer initiative that has earned UD a national ranking as one of the most wired campuses in the country.

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